




TIMELY TOPICS.

Taking in Another Hole In the Muzzle Strap.



The New York *World* deserves great credit for having unearthed the sinister influence which forced The MacMillan Company, one of the largest and best known American publishing houses, to withdraw from circulation a book which they themselves only recently advertised extensively and urged most especially all newspaper editors to procure. I mean the "Official Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War," edited by Dr. Edmund von Mach.

We have all known for some time that the Entente interests have attempted to control, and in some instances do control, the daily press of America. Recently they have shown their control also of some of our magazines, as was evidenced by the sudden withdrawal of a story advertised by the Metropolitan Magazine, with which Colonel Roosevelt is intimately connected. The story, admittedly true, revealed Russian conditions. The Allied

Governments do not desire the American people to know the truth, and such is the pressure they are able to exert that their wishes are complied with over and over again.

I did not, however, believe, before seeing the MacMillan exposé, that the same influences would attempt interference with so big and reputable a publishing house. The proof of the great power of these influences is found not only in the success which has crowned their efforts to have Dr. von Mach's book suppressed, but also in the way in which The MacMillan Company found it necessary to comply with their request.

The MacMillan Company withdrew the book secretly some time ago—they will not tell the day—by telegrams sent by President Brett himself, and without giving the author notice of his action. On the contrary, they were trying to make Dr. von Mach believe that the sale of the book was being pushed. On the very day when The New York World discovered the suppression of the book the Vice-President, Mr. Edward C. Marsh, wrote a letter to Dr. von Mach which I have the latter's permission to publish. The implied deceit is the more apparent when one realizes that on this very day Mr. Marsh had declared to a representative of The *World* that the book had been withdrawn from sale, and that he was doubtful whether it would be restored again. Dr. von Mach had written to The MacMillan Company offering his services if a new announcement of the book were contemplated at this time, as had formerly been suggested to him—such announcement to contain extracts from favorable reviews and personal letters. He also requested in accordance with the clause of the contract with the company making such request obligatory that a semi-annual statement be sent to him. Mr. Marsh replied as follows:

New York, Dec. 27, 1916.

Dr. Edmund von Mach,
% The Citizens' Com. for Food Shpts.,
Woolworth Bldg., City.

My dear Dr. von Mach:—

I have just received your letter of the 26th and I am making a note of your request for the semi-annual statement of account of your books. I am also placing on our records your Cambridge address as your permanent address. I shall at once look into the matter of a circular of the "Documents," but I believe our Advertising Department issued such a circular only a short time ago of which a large number were distributed. However, I shall look this matter up and report to you later.

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Edward C. Marsh,

The Macmillan Company.

What the MacMillan Company itself thought of the book only a little while ago is best seen from the advertising circular the company sent to all important newspapers of the country, including the *Staats-Zeitung*. The circular reads:

"Dear Sir:

"There must be at least one man on every large daily paper and general magazine who has foreign affairs at his fingertips. What a mass of tiresome work is imposed upon him by the diplomatic correspondence bearing on the war! No less than seven bulky volumes—Blue Book, Yellow Book, etc., must be consulted to trace any point.

"The time that will be saved by having the entire Correspondence in a single well-arranged volume is evident. We have just pub-

lished such a volume, arranged and edited by Dr. Edmund von Mach.

"See the advantage of this work to the foreign editor. He has all the diplomatic papers in one convenient volume. More important still, the documents are arranged chronologically, giving under each day's date all the letters and telegrams exchanged on that day. This weaves the correspondence into a consecutive story. A condensed summary is given of each day's despatches. Cross references and annotations are liberally provided, with a cleverly arranged index to the entire mass of correspondence.

"In addition, the editor has included a number of documents frequently quoted, but never before given in available form for reference. These are: The German Chancellor's speech of August 4, 1914, the 'Brussels Documents' issued by the German Foreign Office and the Allied answer to them, the documents claimed to have been found on the Secretary of the British Legation in Brussels, and all the telegrams and letters exchanged between King George V, the Kaiser, the Czar and President Poincaré.

"Finally, the original official 'Books'—Blue, White, Yellow, etc., are photographically reproduced, page for page. This enables the reader, by means of cross references, to turn at once to the original of any document when the exact wording or construction is in doubt.

"Constantly increasing use of the diplomatic correspondence will be made as the war progresses. In the time and labor it will save you this volume will repay its cost many times over. It may be ordered under the title—**OFFICIAL DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS**, edited by Edmund von Mach, price \$6.00. May we send you a copy?

"Yours very truly,

"The MacMillan Company,

"Mail Service Department."

The history of the book is also interesting. Dr. von Mach, having conceived the idea that a source book should be prepared which would make it easy for American students and intelligent readers to study the various diplomatic documents issued by the several European governments immediately after the outbreak of the European War, turned to The MacMillan Company which had published one of his previous books, and whose officers he had learned to respect. Mr. Brett, the President, took very kindly to the idea, and at that time apparently either did not know how damaging the truth would be for the Entente Governments, or believed his company strong enough to withstand the pressure which these Governments or their agents might exert upon him.

Dr. von Mach approached the subject in the same calm and scholarly spirit in which during his post-graduate years in Harvard he had investigated, for instance, disputed manuscripts of Sophocles. Believing, however, with all his heart in the justice of the German cause and afraid therefore that here or there a pro-German bias might show in the book, he engaged a graduate student of the History Department of Columbia University, with instruction to challenge every footnote the strictest accuracy of which was not borne out by the evidence of the published documents.

When the manuscript had been thus carefully revised it was submitted to The MacMillan Company, which placed it in the hands of one or several of their own readers. Every suggestion made by these readers was accepted by Dr. von Mach. The MacMillan Company then entered into a contract with Dr. von Mach, acquiring from him the copyrights to the book and agreeing to publish it and push its sale. To be absolutely sure that the book was fair to all concerned, Mr. Brett

and Dr. von Mach agreed to submitting it once more to an impartial person, whom The MacMillan Company was to select. They selected Prof. Beard of Columbia University. Every suggestion made by Prof. Beard was incorporated in the book, with very few exceptions. In these few exceptional cases, Dr. von Mach gave his reasons for preferring his original wording to Mr. Marsh, and felt at liberty to adhere to it only after the MacMillan Company had agreed to it.

In view of all this, Mr. Brett's explanation given in The New York *World* yesterday to the effect that the book had been withdrawn because complaints had been made against its accuracy seems to fall to the ground. If this were the bona fide reason, moreover, Mr. Brett would at once have notified the author of the complaint, or, when confronted by Dr. von Mach after The *World* exposé, would have shown him a copy of the passages to the accuracy of which exception had been taken. He also would probably have been willing to tell the author who had complained of the book. Mr. Brett, however, contented himself with stating to Dr. von Mach that the complainants were people of such prominence and authority that he could not afford to disregard their complaints!

He made, moreover, another very damaging confession, to the effect that he was very doubtful whether The MacMillan Company would restore the book to the book-market, even if the expert to whom he said he had submitted the charges should report to him that they were not well taken.

That whatever credit is due it may not be denied The MacMillan Company, I am happy to quote Dr. von Mach as stating: "If public opinion should exert itself and make it possible for The MacMillan Company to restore the book, nobody will be better pleased, I am

sure, than Mr. Brett, the President, and Mr. Marsh, the Vice-President. I have known these gentlemen for years as men of high character and I cannot help feeling sorry for them to-day. They must loathe the deceit they have been forced to practice on one of their authors."

My own belief is that the book has been suppressed because the Allied Governments could not stand the truth which in Dr. von Mach's arrangements of their documents is ascertainable by all. I wish to mention only a few of these unpalatable truths.

1. The British Blue Book is incomplete and often at variance with the French Yellow Book and Russian Orange Book.

2. Sir Edward (now Viscount) Grey suppressed a dispatch from Vienna of July 16, sent by the British Ambassador, Sir M. de Bunsen, and containing an accurate forecast of Austria's proposed action against Serbia. By comparing the first and last despatches of the British Blue Book, one sees how false Sir Edward Grey's claim was that on July 20 he did not know what Austria had in mind.

3. The order to keep the British fleet mobilized was given two days earlier than Sir Edward Grey had announced it had been given.

4. Sir Edward Grey's promise of support to France, as quoted by M. Viviani in the French Chamber of Deputies, was different from the one circulated in America through the British Blue Book.

5. Sir Edward Grey found it embarrassing to give "pacific advice" to Russia.

6. France wanted Russia to be more careful in her mobilization lest she give Germany an excuse to proceed to even partial mobilization, and did this on the very day on which she sent

monstrous stories of German mobilization to London.

7. Even England had begun the mobilization of her land forces more than a week before the outbreak of the war.

8. Sir Edward Grey had suspended his conference proposal out of deference to Russia's wishes, and before that had been constantly altering it to meet the wishes of France.

I like Dr. von Mach's book because it does not obtrude his opinions upon the reader. He does not, in fact, express any opinions at all, contenting himself with revealing the truth by copious cross references and by arranging the despatches chronologically under the days on which they were sent. If the book is damaging to Allied interests, it is so on the evidence of the Allied Governments themselves. Their efforts to have the book suppressed and to make it difficult for the American people to discover the truth reveal the almost tragic seriousness of their position.

I regret, of course, that so well known an American publishing house as The MacMillan Company has been forced to jeopardize its prestige, to forget the duties imposed upon it by the fiduciary relations existing between publishers and authors, and to be unmindful of its public duty to the American people. As I said above, The New York *World* deserves great credit for having discovered this new and perhaps most sinister evidence of the anti-American machinations of the Allied interests. May the trumpet blast of The *World* at last arouse the American people to the danger threatening from the quarter of those who are striving to withhold from them the basis on which alone an understanding of the affairs of the world is possible—the truth.

BERNARD H. RIDDER.

December 31, 1916.

New-Yorker Staats-Zeitung,